

REMARKS

This Amendment and Reply is intended to be completely responsive to the Non-Final Office Action mailed June 8, 2011. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and the reasons that follow. Claims 38, 44 and 61 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, Claims 38-62 will remain pending in the present Application upon entry of this Amendment and Reply.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

1. Claims 38-60

On pages 3-16 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 38-60 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,618,485 to Gajewski (“Gajewski”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,060,215 to Schoemann et al. (“Schoemann et al.”) in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,947,511 to Usui et al. (“Usui et al.”). This rejection should be withdrawn because Gajewski, whether taken alone or in any proper combination with Schoemann et al. and Usui et al., fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed inventions.

For example, independent Claim 38 recites a “method of making a molded article” comprising, among other elements, “providing a mold having a first mold section, a second mold section, and a shut-off member, the first mold section providing an A-surface of the molded article . . . the A-surface being a surface of the molded article that is configured to be visible to a vehicle occupant . . . the shut-off member comprising . . . an angled surface that extends entirely between [a] forward surface and [a] first side surface . . . and forming an angled recess in the A-surface of the molded article having an upper surface provided by [an] angled surface of the shut-off member, wherein the upper surface is provided at a sufficiently flat angle relative to vertical by the angled surface of the shut-off member to obscure an interface between the first resin and

the second resin from an occupant of the vehicle interior, wherein the A-surface of the molded article is defined by [a] first resin, [a] second resin and an interface between the first resin and the second resin that includes the angled recess.”

Also, independent Claim 44 recites a “method of making a molded article” comprising, among other elements, “providing a mold having a first mold section, a second mold section, a first shut off member and a second shut-off member, the first mold section providing an A-surface of the molded article, the second mold section providing a B-surface of the molded article, the A-surface being a surface of the molded article that is configured to be visible to a vehicle component, the shut-off members are disposed within the second mold section . . . wherein the A-surface of the molded article is defined by [a] first resin, [a] second resin, [a] third resin, an interface between the first resin and the second resin, and an interface between the first resin and the third resin.”

Gajewski, whether taken alone or in any proper combination with Schoemann et al. and Usui et al., fails to disclose, teach or suggest such methods. First, with regard to both independent Claims 38 and 44, Gajewski does not teach a method of making a molded article that comprises providing a mold that forms an A-surface of the molded article. Independent Claims 38 and 44 expressly recite that the A-surface is a surface that is configured to be visible to a vehicle occupant. The mold disclosed in Gajewski does not provide such a surface. In contrast, the article formed by the mold in Gajewski is a component of an “instrument panel 10” (specifically, an “insert 12” and a “door 24”) that gets covered by a “foamed material 16” and a “skin shell 14” (col. 4, lines 27-39, Figures 1 and 2). It is the outer surface of the “skin shell 14” that forms the A-surface of the “instrument panel 10,” and not a surface of the molded article, as required by independent Claims 38 and 44. As such, Gajewski is not pertinent to the problem that the inventors were trying to solve in the present Application, which was to provide a molded article that does not require a secondary finishing operation (e.g., masking, painting and/or covering with an outer skin). As such, a person having the ordinary skill in the art would not

have looked to combine Gajewski with Schoemann et al. and/or Usui et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

In particular, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention that "[i]t would have been obvious to one having the ordinary skill in the art that using the process of Usui in conjunction with Gajewski would allow the airbag cover to be formed without additional skin or foam material which are used to hide the junction between the two materials." While Gajewski and Usui et al. both relate to air bag covers, they relate to different types of air bag covers. Specifically, a primary objective of Gajewski is to form a hinged connection between a door and a backing insert that allows the door to swing open about the hinged connection when an air bag is inflated. In contrast, a primary objective of Usui et al. is to form an interface between an air bag cover and a frame that allows the cover to be completely detached from the frame when an air bag is inflated. While Usui et al. discloses that its process may allow an interior component to be formed without an additional skin or foam material, the process results in the formation of a recess around an entire periphery of an air bag cover that enables the cover to be completely detached when an air bag is inflated. Inclusion of such a recess would prevent or otherwise conflict with the formation of a hinged connection. Thus, using the process of Usui et al. would leave Gajewski unsuitable for its intended purposes because the presence of the disclosed recess would prevent the interior component from having the hinged connection, which is a primary objective of Gajewski. As such, Applicants submit that the combination of Gajewski and Usui et al. is improper because Gajewski teaches away from being combined with Usui et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Also, with specific regard to independent Claim 38, Gajewski, whether taken alone or in any proper combination with Schoemann et al. and Usui et al., does not disclose, teach or suggest a method of making a molded article that comprises forming an angled recess in an A-surface of the molded article. While the Examiner has properly acknowledged that neither Gajewski nor Schoemann et al. teach forming a recess in an A-surface of the molded article, the Examiner has cited Usui et al. for allegedly teaching this subject matter. For at least the reasons set forth

above, Applicants submit that the combination of Gajewski and Usui et al. is improper because Gajewski teaches away from being combined with Usui et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Nonetheless, even when Usui et al. is combined Gajewski with and Schoemann et al., the combination still does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed subject matter. Independent Claim 38 recites “forming an angled recess in an A-surface of the molded article” (emphasis added), and not simply forming a recess in an A-surface of the molded article. The “angled recess” is further defined in the claim by the language stating that “the upper surface is provided at a sufficiently flat angle relative to vertical by the angled surface of the shut-off member to obscure an interface between the first resin and the second resin from an occupant of the vehicle interior.” While Usui et al. discloses forming a “recess 6” in an A-surface of an interior component, the “recess 6” is not an angled recess as defined by the claim. Specifically, the “recess 6” is not defined by an upper surface provided at a sufficiently flat angle relative to vertical to obscure an interface between a first resin and a second resin from an occupant of the vehicle interior. In contrast, the “recess 6” is perpendicular to the A-surface of the interior component as shown in Figure 3, which does not obscure the interface. Thus, even when Usui et al. is combined Gajewski with and Schoemann et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner (the combination of which is improper), the combination still does not disclose, teach or suggest forming an angled recess in an A-surface of a molded article, as recited by independent Claim 38.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claims 38 and 44 because the combination of Gajewski, Schoemann et al. and Usui et al. as suggested by the Examiner, is improper. Further with regard to independent Claim 38, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection because Gajewski, whether taken alone or in any proper combination with Schoemann et al. and Usui et al., fails to disclose, teach or suggest at least one element of independent Claim 38. Claims 39-43, which depend from independent Claim 38 and Claims 45-60, which depend from independent Claim 44, are allowable therewith for at least the same reasons set forth above without regard to the further patentable subject matter recited in such claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 38-60 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

2. Claims 61-62

On pages 16-19 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 61-62 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gajewski in view of Usui et al. This rejection should be withdrawn because Gajewski, whether taken alone or in any proper combination with Usui et al., fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

For example, independent Claim 61 recites a “method of making a molded article” comprising, among other elements, “providing a mold having a first mold section, a second mold section, a first shut off member and a second shut-off member, the first mold section providing an A-surface of the molded article . . . the A-surface being a surface of the molded article that is configured to be visible to a vehicle occupant.”

In rejecting independent Claim 61, the Examiner properly acknowledged that Gajewski does not teach a method of making a molded article that comprises providing a mold that forms an A-surface of the molded article that is configured to be visible to a vehicle occupant, but cited to Usui et al. for allegedly teaching this subject matter. For at least the reasons set forth above with regard to independent Claims 38 and 44, Applicants submit that the combination of Gajewski and Usui et al. is improper because Gajewski teaches away from being combined with Usui et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claim 61 because the combination of Gajewski and Usui et al., as suggested by the Examiner, is improper. Claim 62, as it depends from independent Claim 61, is allowable therewith for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable subject matter set forth in such claim. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 61 and 62 is respectfully requested.

* * *

Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending rejection has been overcome, and that the present Application is in a condition for allowance. In particular, even when the elements of Applicants' claims, as discussed above, are given a broad construction and interpreted to cover equivalents, the cited references do not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed subject matter. Favorable reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants respectfully put the Patent Office and all others on notice that all arguments, representations, and/or amendments contained herein are only applicable to the present Application and should not be considered when evaluating any other patent or patent application including any patents or patent applications which claim priority to this patent application and/or any patents or patent applications to which priority is claimed by this patent application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by the credit card payment instructions in EFS-Web being incorrect or absent, resulting in a rejected or incorrect credit card transaction, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone if the Examiner believes that another telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present Application. Please direct all correspondence to the undersigned attorney or agent at the address indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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